

How to Deal with Time-Crunch Stress

(Editor's Note: The following story ran in DMV Today in May 2000. Some employees have asked for a reprint because of the helpful hints in the story. Here is a revised version).

Time waits for no one.

It's an uncomfortable sense in the workplace these days. Called time-crunch stress, it is becoming an issue that organizations need to deal with, say experts in studies of organizational behavior

DMV is no exception.

"I don't think there is any question about it," commented Richard Cosgrove of the Bureau of Administration. "When you continue to have mandates that the legislature and others require, coupled with retirements and attrition, others in the organization have to pick up the slack."

Other employees in the agency echoed his thoughts, and managers overseeing divisions noted the same trend.

Some employees have said that the crunch in the



personal lives of employees ripples into the workplace as well.

Coming in the door each morning with employees are the time-crunched issues of squeezing into their day the equally important activities of child or elder-care, work events for a spouse, home chores, and commitments to furthering their education through night-school classes and studying.

When relationships suffer, it also affects work, they said.

Richard agreed, noting that it's the kind of problem that needs to be addressed by the person feeling the crunch.

"Unless people can manage their time and stress, there is the risk of serious health problems, such as burn out. You can't burn the candle at both ends," he said.

The time-crunch pressure in the workplace often comes from "information overload" and its associated problem of finding ways to manage time efficiently, and from changes

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Ethics Are Important to Doing Your Job Right

By Ann Marie Raymond

Ethics in government is everyone's concern, says DMV Commissioner Ralph J. Carpenter.

So how do DMV employees ensure they are following the rules of the road?

Ethics rules for state employees are clear. Here are a few:

- No employee will accept or solicit gifts from any person or organization that has (or had) a business relationship with the DMV.
- No employee will take care of personal business on DMV time.
- Employees are prohibited from obtaining outside employment that will cause them to disclose confidential information gained while at the DMV.
- Employees are prohibited from using their position at DMV for financial gain for themselves or immediate family.
- Employees are prohibited from directly performing any transaction involving licensing, inspection, document verification or validation for themselves, friends or relatives.

"If you do the right thing by following the ethical conduct code and for the right reason and at the right time, ethics within an organization happens on an everyday basis as a matter of routine work," said the Commissioner.

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Bridgeport Office

The Bridgeport office bid a very sad goodbye to Willy Padro, who will be greatly missed. He is transferring to Norwalk, and our loss is their gain. We would also like to welcome some new additions to our office: Shirah O'Donnell, Rosetta Anderson, and Aida Rodrigues. Aida is training in Waterbury and we anxiously await her return. We are very lucky to have a summer worker, Michael Martinez, who has been a great help during this busy time.

Human Resources

Tammy Grella returned to work from maternity leave this past July. She was greeted with colorful balloons, a big "Welcome Back" banner and hugs from her co-workers. Tammy and her family are enjoying baby Isabella Rose, who was born April 5th, weighing in at 7 lbs. 4oz. and measuring 21 inches.

Speaking of new arrivals, the newest H.R. staff member is Tiffany Joyner. Tiffany has had a busy year, joining the H.R. staff in May, just 2 months after moving to her new home in Waterbury, with her husband Earl, sons Naron and Elijah, and daughter Justice. Talk about major changes in one's life!

After the cold winter, "The Beach" seemed to be the vacation spot of choice for the majority of the H.R. staff. Some enjoyed the sunny sands and surf of the Connecticut, Rhode Island, Cape Cod and South Carolina shores. Anthony Webb attended a conference for the National Association for Black Journalists in Atlanta, GA. Tiffany

Around The Agency

Joyner was on a brief getaway at a Massachusetts resort, but Phillippia Fletcher-DeNovellis should win the distance award for traveling, since she ventured home to the island of Jamaica. But then again, the road home is never too long.

Safety and Enforcement

The Bureau of Safety and Enforcement would like to congratulate Lt. Wayne Sinclair of CVSD who will serve as chaplain for the agency.

Winsted Office

This summer we were lucky to have Eileen Johnston help out in our office. She recently left to go back to college, where she is majoring in music. We so tried to have her sing for us, but she was just too shy. I guess we'll just have to wait until she's famous to hear that melodious voice. We wish her the very best in her future endeavors.

James Woodard, our maintainer recently celebrated his fifth anniversary with the DMV. How quickly the years pass -Happy Anniversary Jim!

Heidi Holtman recently spent a glorious week vacationing with her family. The weather was fantastic and being with her family made it even better. Carol Hoebel and her husband spent a fun-filled week in the Canadian Rockies. Wonder if it hit 90 degrees there? John Arcelaschi spent his vacation at the Jersey Shore, swimming and

fishing. Sounds like everyone had a fun relaxing vacation.

We extend birthday greetings to Michael Carson and Jim Woodward who recently celebrated their birthdays. How many more years before retirement?



Deputy Commissioner Anthony Portanova visited Marj Knecht of the Bureau of Administration who was one of the employees that donated blood to the Red Cross last month at the Wethersfield Office.

ERC Corner

Italian Ice Sale is Just the Tip of the Iceberg

By Marj Knecht

The ERC-sponsored Italian Ice and Ice Cream Sundae fundraiser proved to be very popular with the DMV staff. Employees enjoyed a respite from the hot and humid weather while consuming these refreshing treats. Many expressed their pleasure at being able to socialize with co-workers with whom they rarely interact during the normal course of business. While it did not enlarge the coffers dramatically, the ERC considers the event a tremendous success.

Among the upcoming ERC activities to watch for are: "Commissioner/Manager For The Morning," Spirit Week and the annual DMV Golf Tournament. It is not too early to assemble your team. In addition, the ERC will assist in organizing the Heart Walk for this agency. This event, which takes place in late October, is very special to Governor Rell, who is actively encouraging all state employees to participate.

Single-day tickets for Lake Compounce and Six Flags are still available. You may contact Holly Cote, Mary Graziosa, Beth Kleina, Michele Walden or Anthony Webb for more information and tickets. We will keep you posted.

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Need More Time?

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in the workplace environment.

With change – sometimes rapid change – comes new work techniques, new projects and just new or increased duties. Old expectations of competency can be threatened by the shifts. Workers need to develop an understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of failure.

Another inducer of time-crunch stress is the increased use of teams and management of teams so that projects are done efficiently and within deadlines.

The team environment means more meetings so that team members plant their own stake in a project while contributing to its overall growth.

Whether there are changes on the job, increased work, continuing demands in a hectic personal life, or a combination of all, there are some ways to obtain control to manage the stress.

Marilyn Schwartz, an author of numerous articles on quality improvement, offers the following tips:

Get clear about your priorities. You have to know your priorities - especially your number one priority. To do that, you and your supervisor have to agree on what really needs to be done first, second, third, etc., each day.

Focus on activities that lead to results. You can't "do" results - you can only do the activities that lead to results. Identify the activities that will lead to the results you want to achieve, especially for your number one priority, and spend time on them.

Organizations should consider team meetings every day. If someone needs help with a project or task, that is the time to let others know. No one understands more than a co-worker what it's like to do what a colleague does. Team members need to be supportive of co-workers.

Watch out for the detours. Once you determine what you are going to do, stick with it. Work it until it works for you. Stay on track and don't allow the nay-sayers, whiners, and chatterboxes to distract you.

Take time for you. Don't be fooled into thinking you are too busy to take a break. If you don't take the time to do this, you'll be more stressed and you'll start to take out your frustrations on those around you, such as customers.

Be willing to ask for help. As Peter-Vaill, a professor at Georgetown University, says, "We are all living in a permanent whitewater world." In a world where we're always surfing the rapids, we need all the help we can get to keep us stable, prospering and, most importantly, feeling great about our work and ourselves.

There are various avenues for professional assistance. First talk to your supervisor to see if you can resolve the situation. If the resolution recommended does not ease the stress, employees can call the DMV Employee Assistance Program (860-679-2877), which keeps confidential all requests for help. Private therapy or counseling can also assist with lifestyle changes that may be needed for time-crunch stress that is both personal as well as professional.

Ethics and Your Job

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If in doubt, Commissioner Carpenter mentioned following the rule of "The book, the bell, and the candle":

- Follow the rules and regulations in writing (the book).
- Does a warning (bell) go off in your head when you are considering a certain action? If so, ask for guidance. It is always better to be safe than sorry.
- Are you contemplating something you would do in the light (candle) of day with friends and family watching? If it is something you'd only do in the cover of darkness, then it might be against the rules of the employee ethics code either in an explicit or implicit way.

Leading by example is the best way to communicate ethical behavior, Commissioner Carpenter said.

"If you see your managers, your supervisors, your administrators all working to the highest level of behavior, you yourself will hopefully follow their lead," he said.

The official Code of Ethics for DMV Employees can be found on the DMV website, at: www.ct.gov/dmv/lib/dmv/Code_of_Ethics.pdf

Did You Know?

Avoiding the Three Thieves of Productivity

Have you ever been robbed by the three thieves of productivity – distraction, perfectionism, and procrastination?

If you are task and achievement oriented, you've struggled to keep these villains out of your life.

Quick Tips:

1. Not planning enough? Spend a few moments when you get to work getting organized and creating a to-do list to reduce the risk of distraction.
2. Is perfection getting in the way? That speech, project or report is probably ready to go now. Let it fly.
3. Always waiting for tomorrow? Learn how to produce a sense of urgency to ward off procrastination so you can act and avoid delays. Do it by focusing on the consequence of not completing a task and the rewards of getting it done.